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## Abstract

In collaboration with the Goldsmiths ITDS department, noting the Student Engagement Gap, this project was proposed to help students connect to University Life. The Expert Workshop correlated the post-Covid strike era with low student engagement levels, highlighting issues like decreased time, increased stress, lack of presence, lack of awareness, poor interest and fewer resources for community building. The student survey showed that students find it difficult to discover community on campus, would most like to engage through events and highlighted several barriers to and opportunities for engagement (Figure 1). The usability test of the Student Union website showed that easy navigation, clear categorization, concise information, good visuals and multiple search strategies were necessary for discoverability. A categorized event page, robust search tool and calendar tool were confirmed in the Prototype Test as the most important tools.

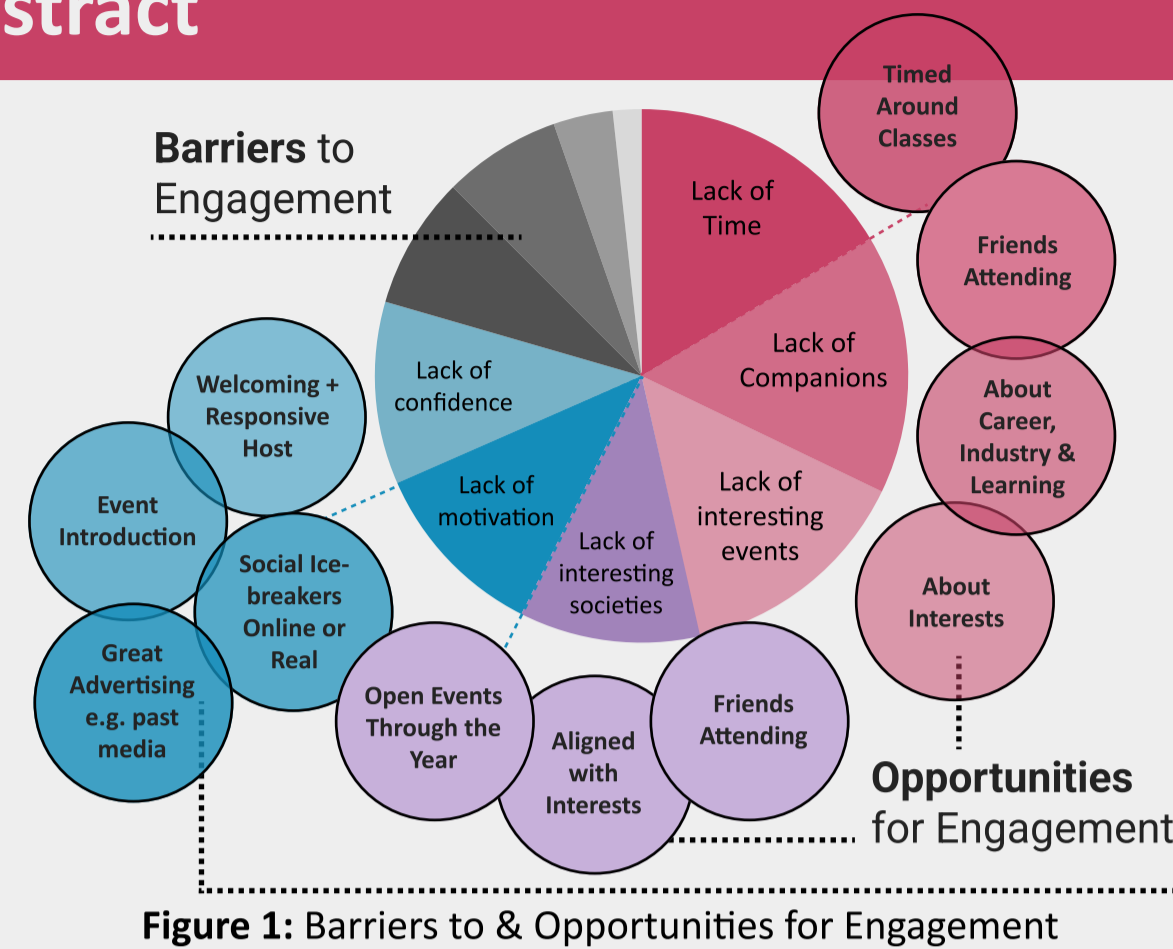
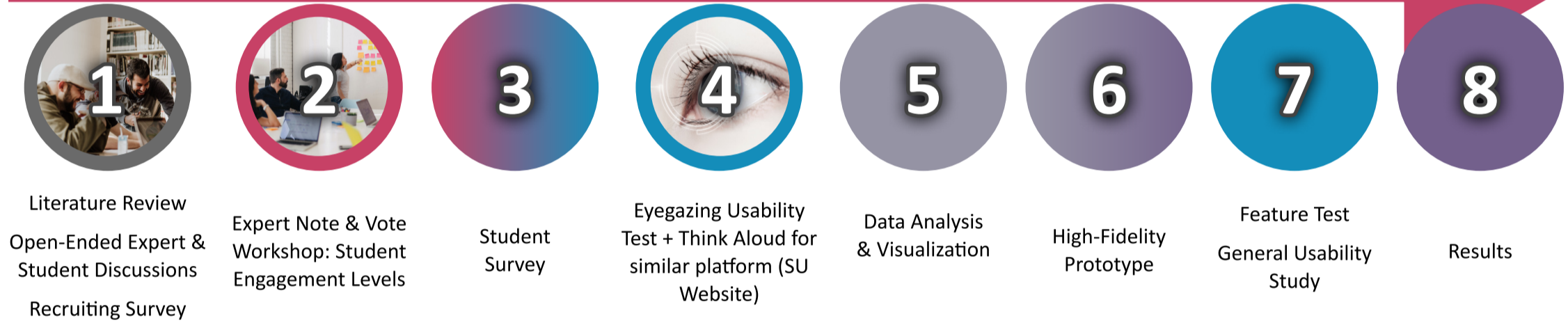


Figure 1: Barriers to & Opportunities for Engagement

## Overall Study Methodology



## Testing & Evaluation Research Results

- The proposed problems and solutions from the **Expert Note & Vote Workshop** were categorized into Root Cause Problems by conducting **content analysis to identify common themes**. Possible solutions were both administrative and UX-based.
- The **student survey** was conducted to understand users, identify wants and barriers to student engagement on campus, and was **analyzed by visualizing results into graphs and drawing comparisons between results that had potential links**.
- The workshop and survey together defined the Product Ecosystem and the Information Architecture for the prototype.
- The **eye-gazing usability test** was conducted to evaluate the UX issues with the mobile Student Union website, as it is the closest comparison to a community-finding platform. In conjunction **with a Think-Aloud session and post-task questions, content analysis supported heat maps and user journeys**. The direct issues noted were minimized in the prototype.
- The resulting **prototype** was evaluated using a **remote feature test and general usability test**. The feature test confirmed debated design choices and reported on the overall design of the prototype, and the general usability test highlighted which discovery methods were most useful.

## Final Prototype, Conclusion & Future Work

The most effective discovery tools were the search and filter, which were robust according to participant feedback, and the calendar tool for checking schedules and determining conflicts. Varied categorization, advertising space and notifications were also considered useful. The map however felt repetitive in addition, and 'Opportunities' felt like they did not belong alongside events, societies and activism as community categories.

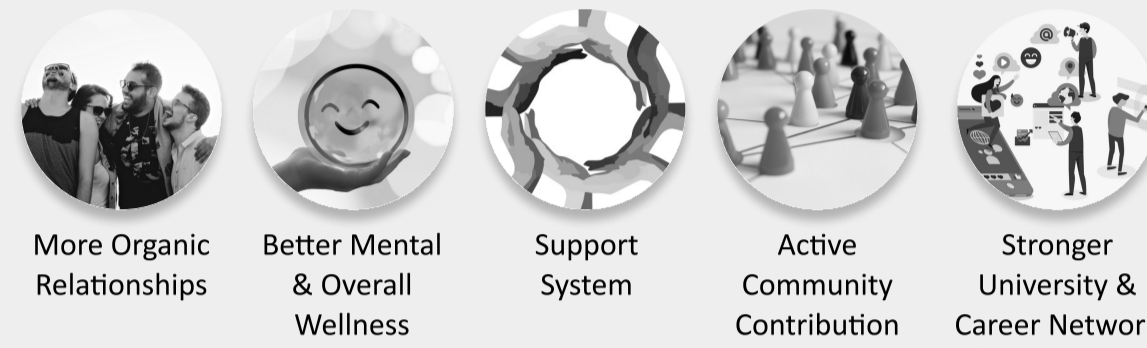
### Areas that Need Further Exploration

- Map Tool**
  - How robust should the map be in relation to community finding?
  - How should the map experience be further designed in terms of incorporating instructions for locating places etc?
- Opportunities Tab**
  - How could Opportunities be incorporated, whether by the University, Student Union or otherwise, to highlight and encourage them to students while being separate from the Community Tab?
- Onboarding Experience**
  - A clear, informative, succinct onboarding experience is needed to teach users the entire app functionality quickly
  - The experience of creating a profile and tailoring its privacy needs to be designed.
- Feedback Loop**
  - An effective, engaging feedback system and loop needs to be designed to engage students and give the university and other community creators feedback on student wants and needs.
- Student Interactivity**
  - The desire for a student activity feed were varied. How students interacts on the platform would need to be understood to design an activity feed experience that is fitting to the university experience, not necessarily mimicking social media.
- Creator Side of the App**
  - The app needs to be explored from the Creator's side to facilitate creating, launching, and managing Events etc. Creators need to be able to easily understand regulations and communicate with both authorities and attendees.

## Introduction & Background

Building friendships and community are often as important as more formal aspects of University like classes, helping a student transition from school, integrate and take away a positive experience. University networks, from peers to professors, are also often the foundations or expansions of career networks.

### Why is this Important to both the Individual User and the larger Community of Users?



### Current State of the Art



The current methods for discoverability come through a multitude of avenues that can be useful but also cause information overload and missed information. While the first 4 methods are the most effective, the Student Union Website is the closest platform for discoverability.

Beyond the scope of university, the current state of the art for event finding are Event Apps like MeetUp and Eventbrite that help people find events based on interests, general socializing or to find like-minded groups.

### Project Goals

- Understand **reasons for low student engagement** levels in the post-Covid era.
- Determine **Student Needs** with regards to participating in aspects of community i.e. events, societies etc.
- Determine methods that **encourage community engagement** through digital services.
- Present community events and activities** to students in a manner that is **informative, relevant and engaging**, without information overload.

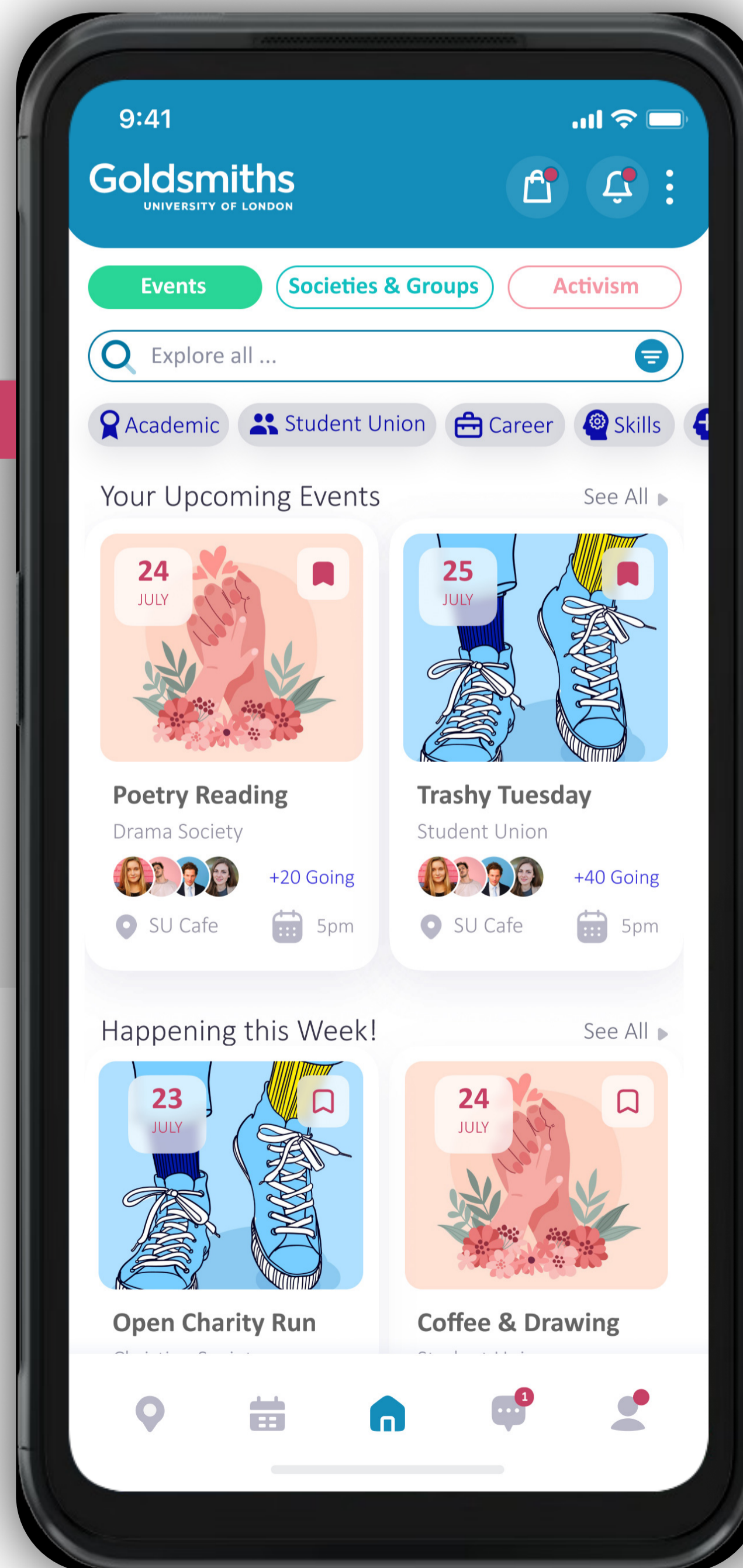


Figure 3: Community Homepage

## Product Ecosystem: Design of Service & Technology Components

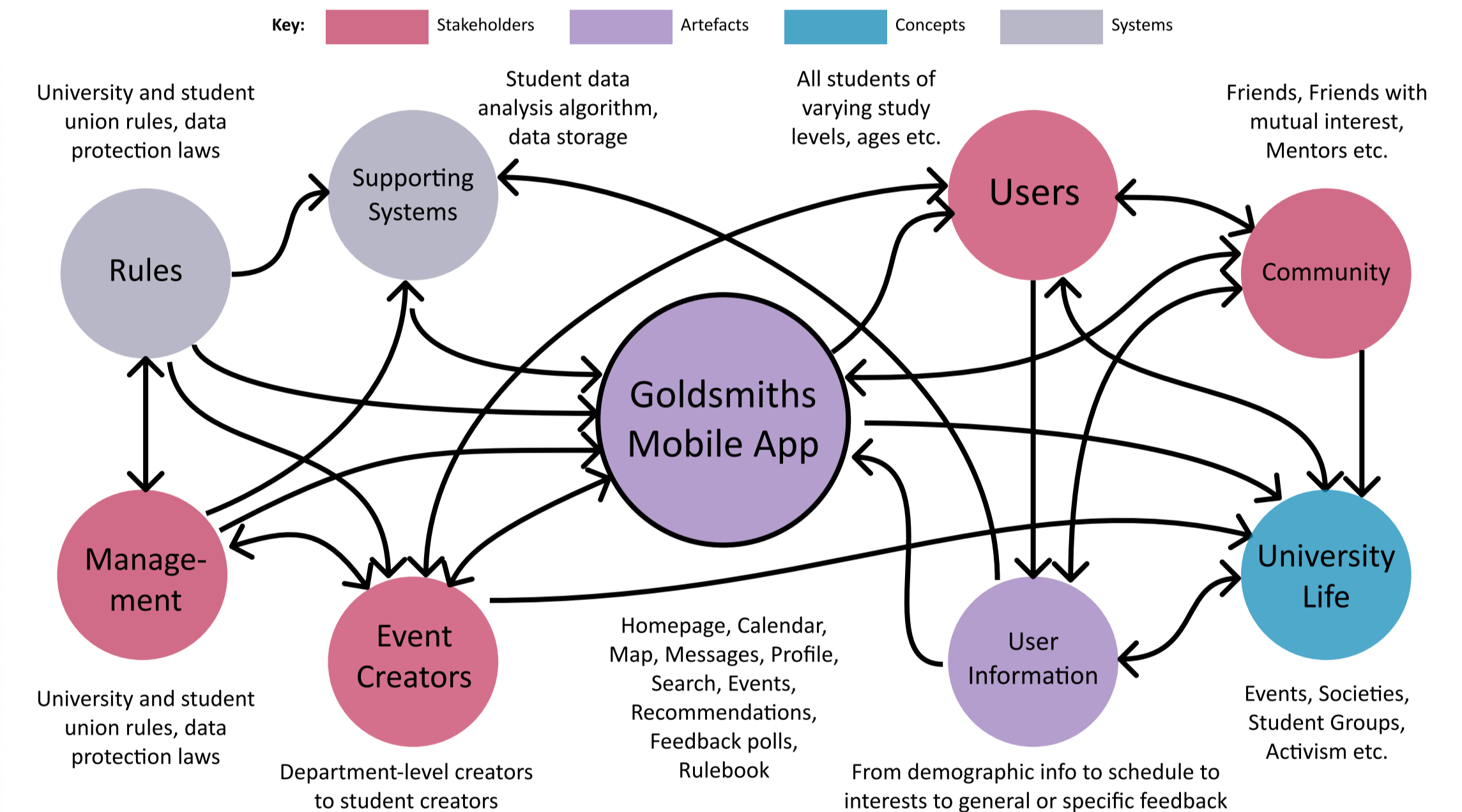


Figure 2

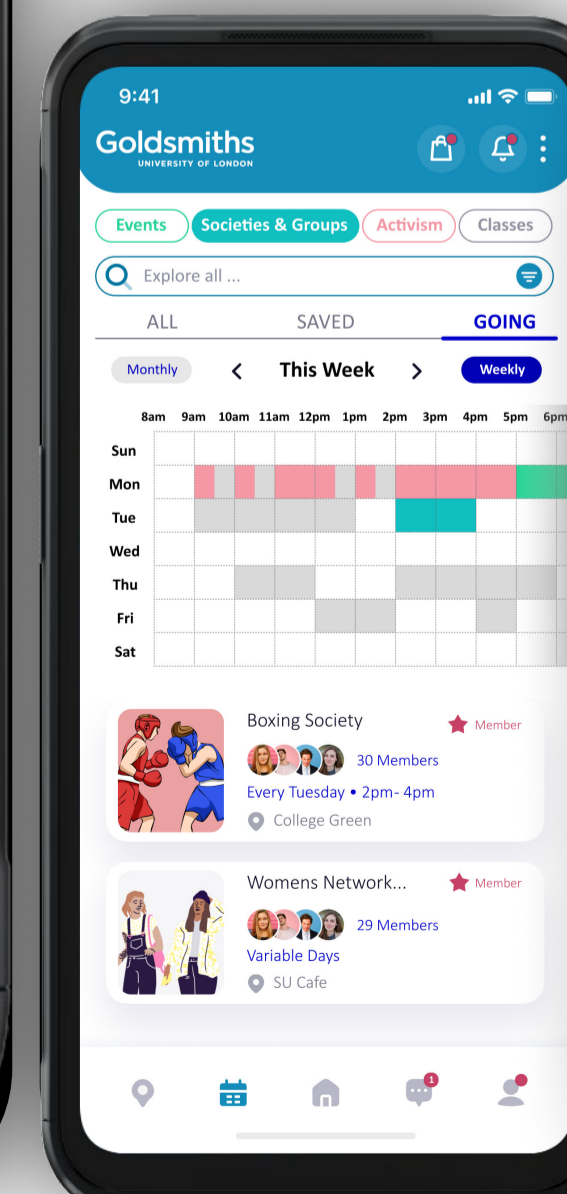


Figure 4: Calendar Weekly Going

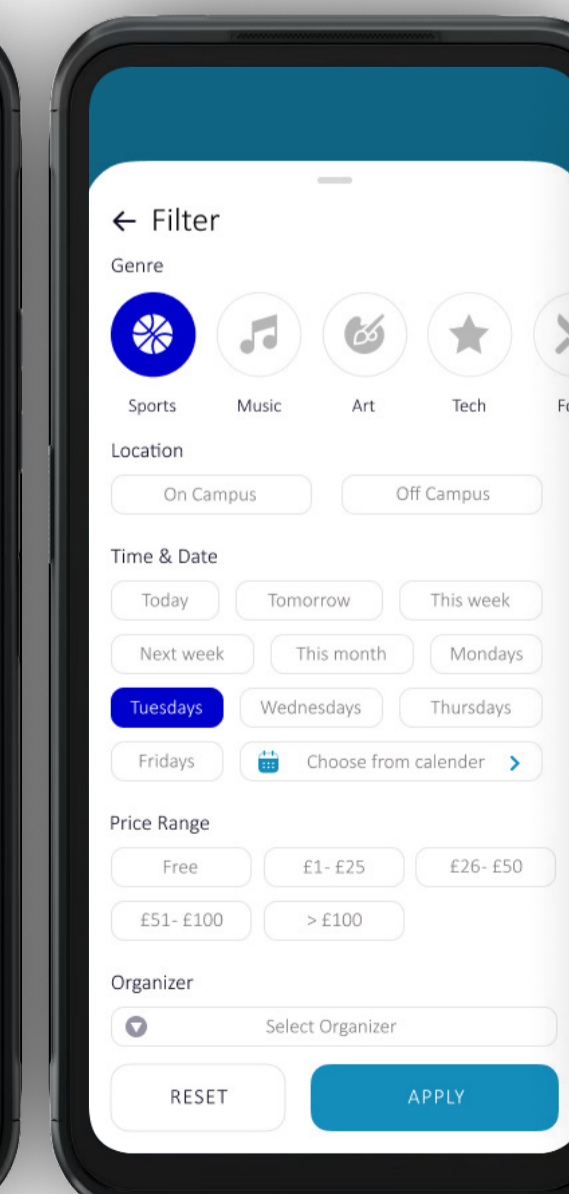


Figure 5: Filter

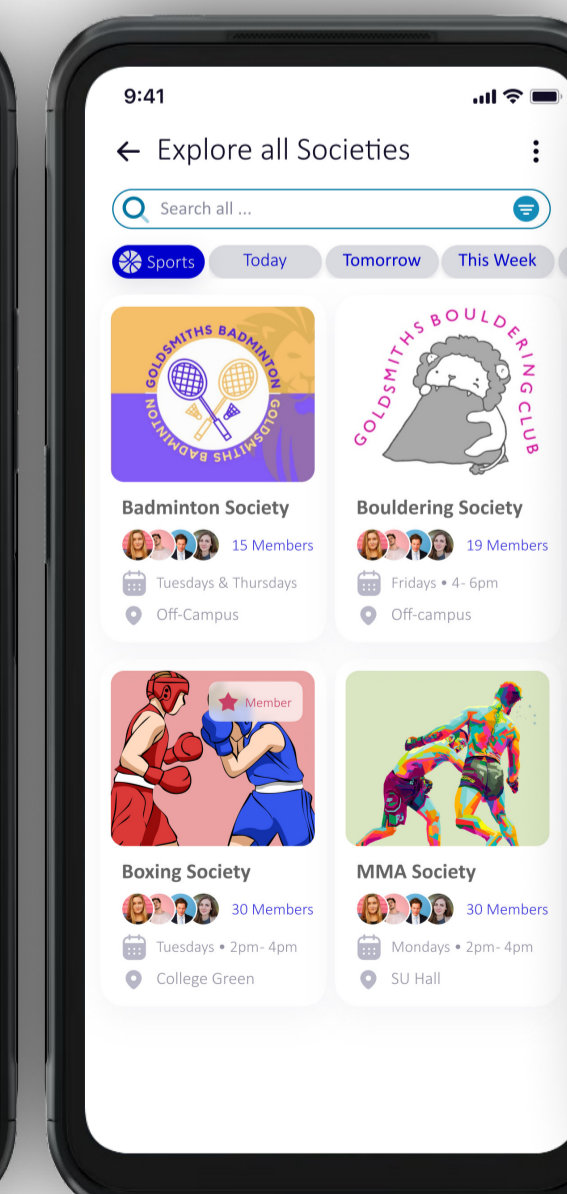


Figure 6: Explore all Categories

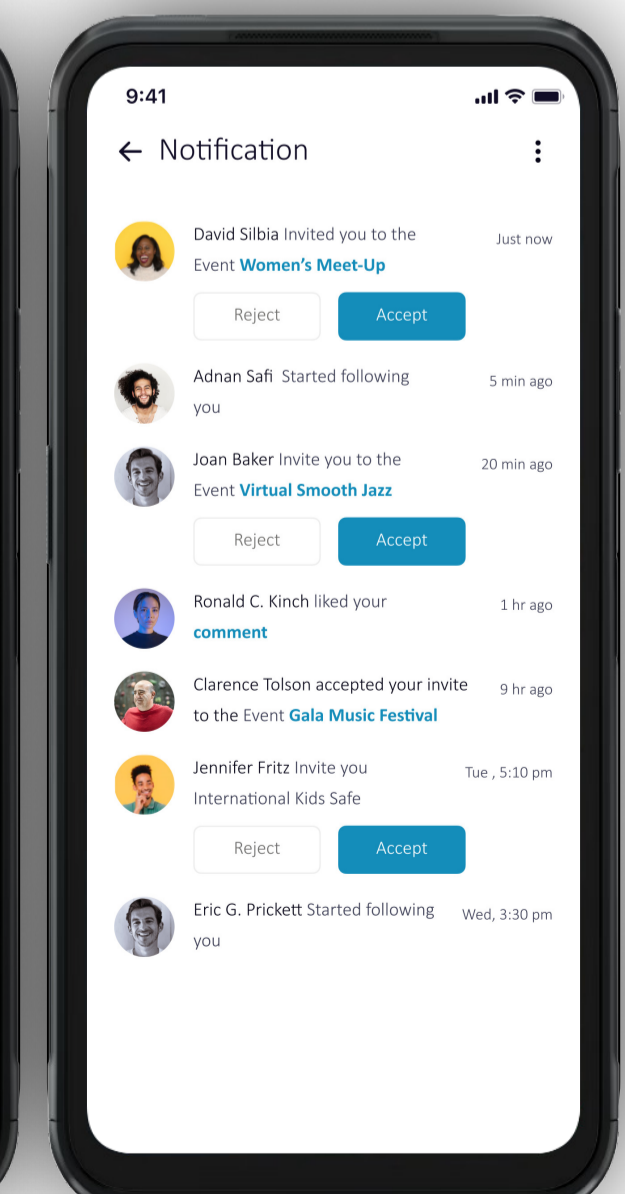


Figure 7: Notifications